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ABSTRACT

Intended to encourage promising and fresh ideas in education research, the Field Initiated Studies (FIS) Program in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) supports a varied array of research projects that are proposed and justified by the applicants. Of the 29 projects described here, 12 were funded in 1990 and 17 in 1991. The topics and research methodologies are diverse, ranging from projects at small, residential Native American schools that are designed to identify giftedness among Pueblo Indians, to quantitative analysis of databases on the achievement of language minority students. One researcher is using ethnographic techniques to describe the family, community, and school influences on the early childhood experiences of nine children, while another is working with teachers to develop better assessment strategies in mathematics. Another is examining the scheduling and assignment process at urban high schools. FIS has placed increasing emphasis on the dissemination of research findings in useful forms to audiences who can put them into practice, including not only the schools and districts where the research was carried out, but policymakers, teachers, and parents across the country. Information provided for each of the funded projects includes the title, the research objective, a description of the project design, the name and address of the principal investigator, the amount of the grant awarded, and the date when a report will be available. Information for individuals or organizations wishing to propose a project is also provided. (BBM)

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Field Initiated Studies Program

Abstracts of Funded Projects 1990 and 1991

IR 015 610

Education and Society Division
Office of Research
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

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More information. . .

The Field Initiated Studies program has accepted proposals and made grant awards on an annual cycle. Please note that this is subject to change at any time. This description is provided for general information only.

An announcement in the **Federal Register** lets the public know that the program will operate in the upcoming fiscal year, when application packages will be available, and the due date for proposals. In the past, the **Federal Register** announcement has appeared in the fall as part of the U.S. Department of Education's general notice inviting applications for a variety of programs.

The Field Initiated Studies program is open to individuals; public and private organizations, institutions, and agencies; and institutions of higher education. An applicant may propose a project that lasts up to 18 months. Proposals are reviewed and evaluated based on their technical quality and national importance by scholars and practitioners from outside of the federal government. The time from announcement to award is typically about 6 to 10 months.

For more information about the Field Initiated Studies program or to be included on the mailing list, please contact:

Delores Monroe
The Field Initiated Studies Program
Education and Society Division
Office of Research, OERI
555 New Jersey Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20208–5646
202–219–2223

Field Initiated Studies Program

Abstracts of Funded Projects 1990 and 1991

Spring 1992

U.S. Department of Education
Lamar Alexander
Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Diane Ravitch
Assistant Secretary

Office of Research
Milton Goldberg
Director

April 1992

Foreword

The Field Initiated Studies (FIS) Program supports a rich and varied array of education research projects. The program encourages promising and fresh ideas unconfined by mainstream directions. Applicants select and justify the topics of the research they propose.

Topics and research methodologies are diverse. From projects at small, residential Indian schools that are identifying what it means to be gifted, to quantitative analysis of databases on the achievement of language minority students, the program displays education research as a vibrant enterprise. One researcher is using ethnographic techniques to describe the family, community, and school influences on the early childhood experiences of nine children, while another is working with teachers to develop better assessment strategies in mathematics. Another is examining the scheduling and assignment process at urban high schools.

The Field Initiated Studies Program has placed increasing emphasis on the dissemination of research findings. Principal investigators are expected to make their findings available in useful forms to audiences who can put them into practice. These audiences include not only people in the schools and districts where the research was conducted, but also policymakers, parents, and teachers across the country.

The program is small. Field Initiated Studies accounts for about 2 percent of the total annual budget of the Office of Research. On average, less than 5 percent of the proposals received in the last three competitions were funded.

This booklet briefly describes the projects funded in fiscal years 1990 and 1991. You are invited to contact the principal investigators directly to discuss their project and findings. Specific information about the Field Initiated Studies program is included at the beginning of this booklet.

My thanks and appreciation are extended to all the educators whose research ideas make this program possible. Delores Monroe, the FIS coordinator, and other staff in the Office of Research have contributed greatly to the success of the program. It is through all these efforts that the research ideas have become a reality.

Milton Goldberg
Director
Office of Research
Office of Educational Research
and Improvement

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Academic Learning and Critical Reasoning: A Study of Knowing in Three Academic Areas

Research Objective: This study examines relationships among teachers' conceptions of knowledge of their subject, classroom language, and how students learn to think critically about what they read and write.

Project Design: The project studies six high school teachers representing three subjects—American History, American Literature, and Biology—as they help students engage in critical reasoning about their coursework. Case studies focus on how content is introduced, discussed, understood, and criticized in each teacher's classroom. Particular attention has been placed on how student subject-specific, critical thinking skills develop in response to teacher emphases.

This project is a part of the principal investigator's ongoing research, which examines conceptions of learning in a series of academic disciplines as revealed in the scholarly literature and manifested in teachers' understanding. This stage moves into the classroom over the course of one academic year, with teams of research assistants and teachers engaging in activities to develop the teachers' abilities to articulate their interest in ways of knowing, which will in turn affect student learning.

Principal Investigator: Judith Langer
State University of New York
Albany, New York 12222
518–442–5029

Award: $70,117

Report Available: March 31, 1992

The Colorado Literacy Study: Using Multiple Indicators to Identify Effective School Practices for At-Risk Children in the Language Arts

Research Objective: This study compares the effectiveness of a range of instructional practices in urban third and fourth grade classrooms.

Project Design: Forty third and fourth grade classrooms, in schools with an at-risk population of at least 25 percent and with either a meaning-based or skills-based instructional approach have been studied. These instructional approaches have been compared with respect to the following outcome measures: persuasive writing, descriptive writing, language conventions, reading comprehension, attitude towards reading, and attitude towards writing.

Case studies of effective schools and classrooms have been developed, and followup interviews conducted with selected students. The results provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of effective literacy instruction.

Principal Investigator: Alan Davis
University of Colorado at Denver
1200 Larimer Street
Denver, Colorado 80204–5300
303–556–4848

Award: $75,383

Report Available: May 31, 1992

Early Language and Literacy Activities in the Home

Research Objective: The purpose of this project is to study the effectiveness of a home-based language stimulation program for disadvantaged children.

Project Design: The 60 research subjects are 30- to 40-month- old children and their parents, in low socioeconomic status families with low levels of parental education and literacy skills. The research studies the differences among three experimental groups: parents who receive training in reading activity, parents who are simply directed to read to their children daily, and a control group of parents who are offered no guidance at all. The effects are being evaluated in terms of parental success in implementing the program and changes in the children's oral language skills.

Principal Investigator: Barbara DeBaryshe
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, North Carolina 27412–5001
919–334–5307

Award: $72,860

Report Available: September 30, 1992

Identifying Giftedness Among Pueblo Indians

Research Objectives: The purpose of this study is to lay a foundation for the development of identification criteria for gifted Native American students and to understand how the Pueblo communities perceive and identify giftedness within their cultural context.

Project Design: The research addresses the following issues:

(1) What characteristics do the respective Pueblo communities identify as indicative of giftedness from a traditional community perspective?

(2) What portions of a commonly used identification instrument (the WISC-R) appear to reliably identify gifted Pueblo students?

(3) Are there linguistic or cultural variables that prevent Keres-speaking Pueblo students from comprehending the directions or procedures for success on a test of creativity? If so, what are they?

Traditional leaders from the Keres-speaking community identified and described gifted adults who were then interviewed. A questionnaire/scale was developed based on characteristics and perceptions identified by these gifted adults based on the interviews. In addition, students' performance on the WISC-R and on the creativity test were analyzed to answer issues (2) and (3).

Principal Investigators: Mary Romero
Holger Schultz
Santa Fe Indian School
P.O. Box 5340
Santa Fe, New Mexico 85702
505–989–6310

Award: $68,000

Report Available: March 31, 1992

Immigrant Students in San Diego: School Contexts and the Educational Achievement of the LEP/FEP Language Minorities

Research Objective: This study examines the process of educational adaptation among language minority youth and the impact of these second-generation immigrant students on school systems.

Project Design: The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, focusing on all Hispanic and Asian students in secondary schools in a large urban school district. Multivariate analyses of a database of approximately 30,000 students show the effects of school context factors, community context, family background and student characteristics on English language ability, educational achievement, and attrition.

Classroom observation and indepth interviews with a sample of 50 school personnel enhances the analysis of school contexts and school staff perceptions of the various types of immigrant students.

Principal Investigators: Ruben Rumbaut
Kenji Ima
San Diego State University
San Diego, California 92182
619–594–2708

Award: $69,783

Report Available: December 31, 1991

FIS—FY 90

An Investigation of State Education Agency Policies, Strategies, and Activities to Improve Family Involvement in Education

Research Objective: This project studied state education agency initiatives in four states to support and increase family involvement in education.

Project Design: The areas of state education initiatives that this project focused on included:

(1) Teacher in-service training to improve teacher capacity to work with families as partners;

(2) Pre-service training to encourage teacher training institutions to include family involvement methods in their curriculum for prospective teachers;

(3) Technical assistance initiatives for local districts and schools to implement family involvement programs and strategies;

(4) School improvement efforts that use family involvement as a key component of school improvement; and

(5) Other activities such as incentive grants and model programs.

Using selected case studies, the project documented how state education agencies have sought to improve family involvement in education using a variety of strategies. In addition, the components were analyzed and evaluated for the effects of these strategies.

Principal Investigators: Cynthia Brown
Glenda Partee
Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202–408–5505

Award: $74,252

Report Available: September 30, 1991

Literacy Learning in Whole Language Classrooms: An Analysis of Low Socioeconomic Urban Children Learning to Read and Write in Kindergarten and First Grade

Research Objective: The purpose of this study was to describe the ways that low socioeconomic status children make sense of and interpret literacy instruction in kindergarten and first grade when a whole language instructional approach is used.

Project Design: The project replicated an earlier investigation of sense-making in traditional reading and writing classrooms with the same population, thus making possible important comparisons between the two approaches. The earlier stage of this research was supported by the National Council of Teachers of English and the University Research Council.

The 50 children in this study were randomly selected from two kindergarten classes in two different urban elementary schools. The research questions included: What prior knowledge of written language do the subjects hold? How does this knowledge interact with literacy instruction? What is the relationship between knowledge construction in beginning literacy instruction and learning to read and write? How does whole language instruction compare to traditional basal instruction?

Principal Investigator: Karin L. Dahl
The University of Cincinnati
608 Teachers College
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0002
513–556–3571

Award: $45,758

Report Available: November 30, 1991

Mentoring, Gender, and Publication Among Social, Natural, and Physical Scientists

Research Objective: This study explores mentoring and publication among men and women scientists in sociology, biochemistry, and physics.

Project Design: Questionnaires probe the extent and nature of collaboration with mentors, including publication records, career progress, and mentoring of current students among 900 men and women scholars in the three fields.

The study identifies mentoring relationships that enhance productivity and gender equity. It also illuminates barriers to women's participation in effective mentoring relationships.

Principal Investigator: Linda Grant
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30605
404–542–3228

Award: $63,100

Report Available: July 31, 1992

Research Knowledge and Educational Policy

Research Objective: This study explores the conceptual and instrumental uses of social research knowledge among education policymakers in the United States and Australia.

Project Design: The research includes asking educational administrators about their roles in policymaking activities and their associated familiarity with and use of research-generated knowledge. The three types of administrators to be interviewed are line policymakers in central administrative units, policy advisors, and school principals.

The research will be replicated in Australia, where social research and education policy are more tightly linked and education is more centrally controlled. The research will examine how educational research is and could be used to inform education policymaking.

Principal Investigator: Bruce Biddle
University of Missouri
1507 East Broadway
Columbia, Missouri 65211
314–882–7888

Award: $63,757

Report Available: May 31, 1992

Retroactive Longitudinal Study of Success Factors Associated with First-Generation Mexican Immigrant High School Students

Research Objective: The primary intention of this study was to identify the factors associated with the success of Mexican immigrant students who were enrolled in a large urban high school.

Project Design: The study retroactively examined school records, from initial year of entry, and conducted student interviews to identify factors associated with educational attainment among these students.

The data collected through these activities was used to develop a field-test edition of the Immigrant Student Academic Monitoring Instrument that could be used by high school counselors and advisers in newcomer centers to help these students succeed in school.

Principal Investigator: Reynaldo Baca
Educational Testing Service
2 North Lake Avenue
Pasadena, California 91101
818–578–1971

Award: $54,624

Report Available: December 31, 1991

The Role of Family Values and Behaviors in Educational Performance and Attainment: The Case of Indochinese Immigrants to the United States and Lessons for Other Children Who Are Potentially At Risk

Research Objective: This project studied immigrant students and families of four Indochinese cultural groups—Hmong, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Lao—in order to understand the cultural factors that influence their educational achievements.

Project Design: The study focused on the role parents play in cultivating values and capabilities that lead to educational achievement. The research activities included in this project were: (1) a comprehensive review of relevant theory and research; (2) an analysis of data on student performance in several schools which included significant numbers of Indochinese students; and (3) a qualitative study of the families of two students from each of the four identified ethnic groups.

Principal Investigators: Willis Hawley
Suparvadee Mitrsomwang
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
615–322–8104

Award: $74,357

Report Available: December 31, 1991

Women's Educational Leadership: A Study of Superintendents and Gatekeepers

Research Objective: This study analyzed the leadership strategies women superintendents employ and examined how the superintendency continues to be dominated by men and how that domination is challenged.

Project Design: Drawing upon theoretical bases, the structural forces and cultural influences on women's educational leadership and the contexts in which it is exercised were examined. The project identified the leadership strategies of women superintendents and the obstacles in the educational system to equal participation by women in this role, in which women currently occupy 3 percent of the existing superintendent positions.

1986–1989 data from research participants, who included 27 women superintendents and 52 gatekeepers to superintendency, were analyzed and interpreted.

Principal Investigators: Colleen Bell
Susan Chase
University of Tulsa
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104
918–631–3087

Award: $53,175

Report Available: November 30, 1991

Adult Undergraduate Students: Patterns of Learning Involvement

Research Objectives: The study's objectives are (1) to identify the patterns of learning involvement for the adult undergraduate as a learner, student, worker, family member, and citizen of the community; and (2) to identify potential differences in patterns of adult learner involvement at community colleges, universities, and private liberal arts colleges.

Project Design: The project uses case study interviews to develop naturalistic, qualitative descriptions of adult undergraduate learners. The studies focus on the subjects' involvement in the college community, the classroom, and in relation to other adult roles.

These descriptions are being used to construct a typology of descriptive patterns of adult undergraduate involvement. A sample of 90 adults over 30 years old will be selected, varying by gender, hours of enrollment, and academic areas of concentration. Subjects are from different kinds of undergraduate environments in both urban and rural settings.

Principal Investigator: Carol Kasworm
University of Tennessee
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996–0140
615–974–2574

Award: $72,004

Report Available: September 30, 1993

A Collaborative Ecological Model for Inner-City Early Childhood and Family Education Research and Development

Research Objectives: The project is a pilot study for a 5-year effort to construct a replicable model for collaborative efforts between postsecondary institutions, public and private schools, state and local agencies, and community resources to support early childhood and family education.

Project Design: It documents the strengths and weaknesses of three early childhood centers, trains teachers as researchers, develops and disseminates current successful practices, and documents the process of the collaborative research and development effort.

Using ethnographic techniques, the researchers are studying the school, family, and community contexts of three children from an inner-city Head Start site, three children from an inner-city Hispanic early childhood center, and three children from an inner-city black early childhood center.

After being analyzed, the research findings will be discussed with parents, school personnel, agency personnel, and mental health department representatives. The research teams will then develop staff and parent activities designed to improve the total environment of the child and family for learning.

Principal Investigator: Jill Sunday Bartoli
Elizabethtown College
One Alpha Drive
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania 17022–2298
717–367–1151 ext. 379

Award: $65,981

Report Available: June 30, 1992

The Computer as an Evolving Literacy Tool: Part of the Computers in Early Literacy Project

Research Objectives: The objectives of this project are to continue the third year of a 5-year longitudinal study of the emerging literacy skills of lower socioeconomic status students using the computer as a literacy tool. The findings of the research will describe the development of linguistic proficiency in low socioeconomic status black children.

Project Design: The project consists of two studies:

(1) In Study I, 32 children from two kindergartens and two first grades in a school in an urban district will be observed as they write stories on the computer and with paper and pencil at spaced intervals over the year. The purpose is to test rival explanations of the differences between forms of literacy on and off the computer.

(2) Study II looks at collaborative writing with and without a computer. Four pairs of kindergarten students will be observed as they write stories at spaced intervals over the year, and six pairs of first grade students will do the same form of writing over the course of the year.

Principal Investigators: Elizabeth Sulzby
Marilyn Shatz
University of Michigan
610 East University
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109–1259
313–747–0609

Award: $80,003

Report Available: December 14, 1992

Identifying Giftedness Among Pueblo Indians

Research Objective: The overall objective of the project is the continued development of procedures for conducting community based research to define a process that reliably identifies gifted Native Americans.

Project Design: This research project addresses the following issues:

(1) What characteristics do the respective Tewa-speaking Pueblo communities identify as indicative of giftedness from their traditional perspective?

(2) What is the reasoning process used by students who are identified as gifted from the community's perspective but who do not score high on a commonly used identification instrument, i.e. the WISC-R?

(3) What kinds of cultural themes surface on the Torrance Creative Thinking Figural Test, and how are students' scores affected by these cultural themes?

The project will identify traditional leaders of the Tewa-speaking community to find and describe gifted adults. After interviewing these adults, a comparative analysis will be done between the Tewa-speaking and Keres-speaking communities to identify similar characteristics.

Students will be tested to determine their reasoning behind the responses on the WISC-R, and the results of the creativity test will be analyzed to determine cultural themes and their effect on student scores.

Principal Investigators: Mary Romero
Holger Schultz
Santa Fe Indian School
P.O. Box 5340
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502
505–989–6310

Award: $117,743

Report Available: August 31, 1993

Innovative Mathematics Assessment and Teachers' Classroom Practice

Research Objective: The major objective of this project is to develop assessment approaches in mathematics that more accurately reflect teachers' own goals and the goals of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards and other national recommendations. Indirectly, the project also seeks to affect classroom teaching practice.

Project Design: About 20 teachers from upper elementary, middle, and high schools will participate in this three-part project. The first part is graduate coursework in current mathematics assessment techniques. The second part has the teachers developing and implementing strategies to assess student performance in mathematics. The third part involves monthly classroom observations and a student questionnaire to evaluate the effects of the different assessment approaches on teachers' classroom practices.

Principal Investigator: Gerald Kulm
College of Education
Texas A & M University
College Station, Texas 77843
409–845–8395

Award: $80,752

Report Available: November 30, 1992

Language Minority Student Achievement and Program Effectiveness

Research Objective: The project will evaluate the effectiveness of education for language minority students, specifically the length of time necessary to become academically successful in a second language.

Project Design: The study focuses on two areas that have an impact on achievement: (1) instructional practices and materials that promote learning in both English and the content areas and (2) school climate and organizational structure.

By analyzing available data on student, instructional, and program variables, the relationship to academic achievement in a second language will be determined. The research uses available student records in four school districts, with a total sample size of about 24,000 student records. Additional data may be gathered.

The statistical data analysis strategy explores the most powerful variables, rather than testing specific, formulated hypotheses. This is an "action research" project—jointly designed with the school district personnel to provide decisionmaking information.

Principal Investigators: Virginia Collier
Wayne Thomas
George Mason University
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703–323–3782

Award: $72,323

Report Available: November 30, 1992

Learning Science Concepts in the Context of High School ESL Instruction

Research Objective: The objective of this research is to improve the science education opportunities for limited English proficiency students by integrating science instruction with an English as a Second Language (ESL) high school program.

Project Design: This project implements and evaluates a plan for embedding science instruction in the English as a Second Language program at a large urban high school. The theoretical basis for the plan is derived from research findings in cognitive science.

Elements of the plan concentrate on a limited number of concepts: the use of computers, cooperative learning strategies, interdisciplinary study, and mentoring provided by bilingual university students with backgrounds in computer science, science, or cognitive science. The project involves four science and ESL teachers, and approximately 100 ninth and tenth grade students, focusing on spanish-and Korean-speaking students.

Pre- and post-test comparisons include attendance; grades in ESL, math, and science; and student curriculum plans. Interviews and questionnaires are being used to assess student learning in science. The study also examines student language proficiency scores.

Principal Investigator: Rochel Gelman
University of California at Los Angeles
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90024
213–206–7236

Award: $63,523

Report Available: June 30, 1993

Longitudinal Study of Children At Risk

Research Objective: This project continues a longitudinal study of at-risk children who were enrolled in four types of early childhood intervention programs. The project tracks the differences in achievement among groups through the fifth year of schooling.

Project Design: Areas examined include: the possible relationships between school and classroom environment, teaching methods, decline in student achievement, and shift in student attitude toward schooling. Questions on student socioeconomic background and school success and whether or not the group differences are maintained from fourth to fifth grade are also looked at.

The research sample for the study is 1,240 of the original 1,540 (95 percent black, 5 percent Hispanic) students remaining in the study since its beginning in 1985–86. The project administers student surveys, interviews a sample of parents, and studies the teaching strategies of a sample of teachers.

Principal Investigator: Mavis Hagemann
Chicago Public Schools
1819 West Pershing Road
Chicago, Illinois 60609
312–535–4020

Award: $76,127

Report Available: December 31, 1992

A Longitudinal Study of Tracking in Middle and Secondary Schools

Research Objective: The objective of this research is to study the determinants and consequences of tracking on the learning of middle and high school students of various backgrounds.

Project Design: The project continues to collect data on students who began seventh grade in 1986 or 1987. Data is now being collected on the last year for the first cohort, and the last 2 years for the second cohort. The sample represents more than 4,000 students from seven public middle schools, two private elementary schools (K-8), eight Catholic elementary schools, and then five public, one private, and two Catholic secondary schools.

The schools are all located in two Midwestern cities. The schools vary in their tracking practices. Information is being gathered at the school, grade, class, and individual levels. The longitudinal database collected for this purpose will be completed and made available for analysis.

Principal Investigator: Maureen Hallinan
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
219–239–8294

Award: $70,539

Report Available: July 14, 1993

Making Sense of Reading and Writing in Urban Classrooms: Understanding At-Risk Children's Knowledge Construction in Different Curricula

Research Objective: The purpose of this study is to provide longitudinal data for a more complete view of how children understand beginning literacy instruction.

Project Design: This study focuses on the effects of the transition from whole language instruction in kindergarten and first grade to traditional skills-based or whole language classrooms in the second grade. It builds on previous research projects, funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, of literacy instruction in kindergarten and first grade with urban, low socioeconomic status black and white children.

The research subjects for this study are the 50 children who participated in the study of whole language instruction from the fall of 1989 to the spring of 1991. Their skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards literacy are being compared as some of them make the transition into a skills-based instruction second grade classroom and the others move into a whole language instruction second grade classroom.

Data collection includes performance on reading and writing tasks, interviews, classroom teachers' records and judgments of student performance, and twice monthly classroom observations, which are being videotaped. For more intensive study of some research questions, subsamples of 12 and 24 students—balanced according to the instructional method—are being selected.

Principal Investigator: Penny Freppon
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221–0002
513–556–3574

Award: $48,214

Report Available: December 31, 1992

Matching School Resources and Student Needs: Scheduling and Assignment Problems in High Schools Serving At-Risk Youth

Research Objective: This project attempts to discover how and why disadvantaged students are placed in unsuitable high school courses or programs in order to make recommendations for improving scheduling and assignment procedures.

Project Design: This project is testing the assumption that students are assigned to high school classes and programs on the basis of adequate information about the students and valid selection criteria. By studying scheduling and assignment practices in four urban high schools, common practices will be identified at the institutional rather than the individual level.

Approximately 15 staff members at each school who are involved in the scheduling and assignment process are being interviewed several times over the year. Data collection will focus on what kinds of information are needed, what kinds of information are actually available, and what kinds of demands are placed on the staff. There will also be group interviews with school staff affected by changes in student assignments.

Finally, student records are being examined in cases where schedules or programs are altered during the fall semester in response to a request from a student, parent, teacher, or counselor, to illuminate the relationship between such requests and the scheduling process. Both fall and spring semester scheduling is being studied.

Principal Investigator: Gary Natriello
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York, New York 10027
212–678–3087

Award: $75,669

Report Available: November 30, 1992

Minority Students with Disabilities in the Small, Rural School District: An Ethnographic Policy Study

Research Objectives: One objective of this study is to determine how small, rural school districts achieve equity in providing minority students with access to appropriate education services, including special education. The other is to examine the influence of federal, state, and local policies on how Native American and migrant bilingual and LEP students are served in small rural districts.

Project Design: This project uses qualitative methods to identify factors that influence the appropriate assessment and placement of minority handicapped students and to describe parent and community perceptions of education policies and services. The 80 subjects interviewed represent parents, special education teachers, school psychologists, paraprofessionals, building administrators, migrant health professionals, and tribal representatives. The project builds on a previous pilot study on the same topic.

Principal Investigator: Patricia Vadasy
Washington Research Institute
180 Nickerson Street
Suite 103
Seattle, Washington 98109
206–285–9317

Award: $81,471

Report Available: December 31, 1992

New Roles for Teachers: A Comparative Study of Two Cities

Research Objectives: The project's objectives are to study the development of new roles for teachers and the impact of those new roles on the schools and school districts in which the teachers work.

Project Design: The study is being conducted in two Northeast urban school districts with similar representative populations where teacher contracts have been negotiated to give teachers new roles. These new roles include teacher involvement in policymaking, school–based management teams, mentoring, and the assessment of teaching.

In addition to studying the effects of these new roles on teachers' self-understanding, beliefs, and teaching practices, the study looks at their impact on school structure and governance, and on students. The study identifies and documents positive developments and good practices.

A comparative case study method is being employed to observe developments in these two school districts. Data collection involves fieldwork and interviews with teachers and administrators at six schools, as well as other interviews and observations of relevant activities. A core group of six to eight teachers are being studied in each school, with field visits to the school one day a week throughout the academic year.

Principal Investigators: Gerald Grant
257 Huntington Hall
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13244–2340
315–443–9079

Christine Murray
SUNY College at Brockport
Brockport, New York 14420
716–395–2157

Award: $78,873

Report Available: March 31, 1993

Reducing Course Failures and Grade Retention of Middle School Students: Problem Sources and Solutions

Research Objectives: The goals of this project are to determine the major factors used in decisions to assign failing grades to students or to hold students back in grade and to analyze alternative policies and programs for reducing failure and retention rates.

Project Design: The research design of this project combines quantitative and qualitative studies. It analyzes existing longitudinal data on a large urban school district with 23,000 students in 27 middle schools for factors associated with course failure and grade retention, with special focus on assignment of pupils to particular teachers and tracks.

A new survey of 500 teachers in the above schools is being conducted and then combined with existing data on students to analyze teacher decisionmaking with respect to grades. The investigators are also conducting qualitative studies of at least two school sites with unusually low course failure and grade retention rates to identify effective policies and practices.

Principal Investigators: James McPartland
Henry Jay Becker
Linda Winfield
Johns Hopkins University
Charles and 34th Streets
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
410–516–0370

Award: $74,579

Report Available: May 16, 1993

Special Education Integration–Unification Initiative for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities: An Investigation of Program Status and Impact

Research Objectives: The project aims to develop information about current efforts to integrate special education students in general education programs in one state system of public schools. It identifies obstacles to the implementation of such efforts, documents factors that influence professional attitudes about such efforts, and analyzes actual student outcomes resulting from such programs.

Project Design: Based on a statewide survey of 137 public school special education supervisors, school systems that are and are not implementing integrated models are studied. Sixty general education supervisors, 180 building principals, 600 general education teachers, and 300 learning disabilities teachers are being surveyed about these programs. Achievement data from 100 students are being analyzed, and followup interviews with 90 school personnel are being conducted. One hundred parents are also being surveyed, and additional interviews are being conducted with a group of 20 parents and students.

Principal Investigator: Cherry Houck
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
703–231–5269

Award: $72,323

Report Available: November 14, 1992

A Study of Long-Term Changes in Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

Research Objective: This study extends previous research on staff development processes that changed teachers' beliefs and practices and positively affected students' learning of reading comprehension.

Project Design: This new work develops descriptive information for other staff developers to use when working with teachers to introduce research-based information in any subject matter and to assess the long-term impact of that process on teachers' beliefs and practices.

The researchers are reanalyzing the data on the process of staff development from earlier work, and are reporting the details of how that process takes place. They are also performing a followup study of 17 teachers who participated in the earlier staff development process, repeating the interview, observation, videotaping, and discussion steps of the original process, in order to analyze the long-term effects of the process.

Principal Investigator: Virginia Richardson
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721
602–621–1286

Award: $80,253

Report Available: December 14, 1992

Youth at Greater Risk: A Study of Native Americans

Research Objectives: The study's two major objectives are (1) to identify the factors that contribute to success (graduation) or failure (dropping out) among Native American students in school, and (2) to develop a predictive model for the identification of potential dropouts.

Project Design: This study examines the relationship between personal problems, family background, school factors, and cultural factors and their influence on dropping out of high school. The subjects of the study will be Native Americans from five Indian Reservations and nine tribal groups. Half of the approximately 1,000 subjects will have graduated and the other half will have dropped out of high school during the period of 1979–1989.

School records and a questionnaire are being used to collect data. Statistical analysis of these data will be carried out, and indepth interviews with a stratified random sample of subjects will be conducted to describe the dropout problem from a Native American perspective.

The study examines the dropout problem within the contexts of reservation life, the informal cultural and society sanctions, and the accepted norms and attitudes toward education that are recognized by Native Americans themselves.

Principal Investigator: Ardy Sixkiller Clarke
Department of Education
Montana State University
213 Reid Hall
Bozeman, Montana 59717–0294
406–994–6414

Award: $81,176

Report Available: May 1, 1993

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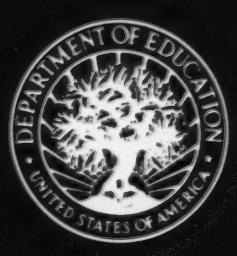

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